Middle School Age Field Trip
United States Courthouse, Indianapolis

Total time: 2-3 hours*

*Please note that each of these activities can be shortened, eliminated, or extended depending on the amount of time a group has available to visit.

Orientation (15 minutes)
All visits by groups to the courthouse will begin with an orientation session. Students will be told the ground rules of the courthouse: no running; voices must be kept down at all times; keep to one side of the hallways; be silent when asked in order to avoid disturbing any trials in session. The facilitator will then give general information about the federal court system (courts in the Constitution, what a district court is, what types of cases are heard here, how cases progress to the Supreme Court, how many judges our district has) and a brief history of the building (date of construction, what preceded this building, the post office and other government agencies that have operated in the building, etc.) These discussions will include photographs and other images to engage the students.

Tour (45-60 minutes)
Students will be guided on a tour of the building. Topics covered will include more specific details on the role of the federal courts; the art and architecture of the building; symbols that reflect justice and government; features of courtrooms; early Indiana history; 20th Century American history; and some legends and stories about the courthouse. The tour incorporates elements of a scavenger hunt to keep students' attention.

Visit with a Judge (30 minutes)
Whenever possible, students will visit with a judge in a courtroom, depending on the judges' availability. Each judge generally chooses what he or she will talk about, but common themes include explaining what judges do; how one becomes a judge; what types of cases a judge hears at the federal level; exciting or interesting cases he or she has heard; the federal judiciary and the Constitution; the importance of good citizenship; and jury service. Judges are also receptive to questions by the students and enjoy engaging them in discussions. Generally speaking, if you book your field trip well in advance, you will have a better chance of meeting with a judge.

Activity/Lesson (45-60 minutes)
Students will complete one of the following activities, selected by their teacher or leader beforehand.

Activity 1: Being an American Citizen
American citizenship is attained in different ways and entitles people to certain rights not available to non-citizens. This activity will begin with a brief presentation on the different ways people can become citizens of the United States, from being born here to emigrating from a foreign land and going through a lengthy naturalization process. To

demonstrate the value of citizenship, students will then take a 10 question exam based on the one that those who are seeking naturalized U. S. citizenship must take. In order to be naturalized, one must answer correctly six of ten questions about American history, government, and symbols.

After students take the test and review their answers, a brief discussion will be held on why such questions might be asked of people who want to become Americans.

Students will then be broken up into groups. Each group will have 10 minutes to create a list of ten rights of American citizens, and then rank those rights in order of importance to them. One student in each group will act as the recorder, and another will be selected to report on why they have ranked the rights as they have. The reporters will each have 2 minutes to explain their group's rankings.

After each group has reported, the class as a whole will rank the overall top-ten rights granted to American citizens, with input and suggestions offered by the facilitator and by the teacher.

Activity 2: Finding a Fair and Impartial Jury

This activity is a simulation of voir dire, or jury selection. The facilitator will begin by asking the students what they know about the jury system in the United States. The facilitator will guide this discussion so that the students understand how juries are called in different courts and in the Southern District of Indiana; who can serve on a jury; and various terms and vocabulary of relevance to jury selection and service.

Three students will then be assigned as defense attorneys, three as prosecutors, and the remainder will each receive a short biography of a prospective juror.

The attorneys for both sides will confer with their teammates as they read a short description of the case for which they are selecting jurors. After reading this description, the attorneys will peruse a prepared list of thirty questions which they can ask the jurors. They should put a star by questions they think will help them find jurors most and least favorable to their side. The attorneys will also be reminded that it is their sworn duty to impanel a *fair and impartial jury*.

Meanwhile, the prospective jurors will take on the identities of the name and biography they have been assigned (each prospective juror will wear a large card around his or her neck stating name, race, gender, and age. It will be up to the students to use the rest of the biographical information to formulate their characters' answers to the attorneys' questions). Some of these characters will have clear traits or backgrounds that make them unsuitable jurors; others will have no clear bias to either side. The prospective jurors will be told by the judge (played by the facilitator) some limited facts about the case: the individuals involved (defense attorneys, prosecutors, the defendant, the judges, etc); what type of crime was involved; the law under which the defendant has been charged; and the type of punishment that could be meted out for the type of crime. The students will be

reminded by the judge that they are to act and answer questions as his or her alter ego would. The jurors will then be assembled, starting with the first twelve, in the “jury box”.

Once the prospective jurors are lined up and the attorneys for both sides are ready to proceed, the judge will explain that each side has four peremptory challenges (they can strike a juror for no given cause); unlimited challenges for cause (tell the judge specifically why a person should not serve on the jury, and have the judge rule on that challenge- this can be done after either side has a question answered by a juror); or can accept the juror.

The attorneys, starting with the prosecution and alternating thereafter with the defense, will take turns asking the jurors the prepared questions they previously looked at. Whenever a prospective juror is struck, a new juror will file into the box. This process will continue until twelve jurors have been agreed upon by the prosecution and the defense.

This activity is designed to impress upon students how hard it is to obtain an impartial jury, and to help them understand one way that a jury can be impaneled and also give all students the chance to role play. The activity will conclude with a discussion session, with students analyzing the jury selection process and the objectivity of it: whether things like race, gender, career, age, socio-economic status, etc. influenced who was selected for the case.

Activity 3: Using Objects and Images to Understand Our Court

Students will be divided into small groups by numbering off. Each group will receive one object which the facilitator will distribute. The students are to answer a set of questions specific to each object, with one student recording their answers. Groups are also required to come up with at least one question that they have about the object. Groups will have 5 minutes to complete this task.

One person from each group will then have 2 minutes to share their group’s answers and observations with the rest of the class. A third group member will present the question the group developed about the object. The facilitator will record the students’ observations and questions for everyone to see and discuss their answers with the class as each group takes its turn, clearing up any confusion or incorrect answers given by the students. The facilitator will also try to answer the students’ additional questions about the objects.

Once all groups have reported, the facilitator will ask the students how each of the objects relate to the courts and lead a discussion on this topic.

The objects and questions presented to students will be:

Gavel	**Robe**
What is this? What is it used for? Who uses it? Where would you expect to see this? Why is it important?	What is this? Who uses it? When might they use it? Where would someone wear this? Why is it important?
Figure of Justice	**Court seal**
What is this? Where would you expect to see this? What is she holding? Why is she holding these things? Why is this object important?	What is this? Who uses it? What is it used for? Where would you expect to see this? Why is it important?
Court reporter machine	**Supreme Court building photographs**
What is this? Who uses it? What is it used for? Where would you expect to see this? Why is it important?	What is this building? Where is this building? Who works in this building? What happens in this building? Why is this building important?
Capitol building photographs	**White House photographs**
What is this building? Where is this building? Who works in this building? What happens in this building? Why is this building important?	What is this building? Where is this building? Who works in this building? What happens in this building? Why is this building important?

Indiana Department of Education Eighth Grade Standards this field trip meets:

Language Arts

8.1.3 Verify the meaning of a word in its context, even when its meaning is not directly stated, through the use of definition, restatement, example, comparison, or contrast.

8.2.2 Analyze text that uses proposition (statement of argument) and support patterns.

8.2.7 Analyze the structure, format, and purpose of informational materials

8.2.5 Use information from a variety of consumer and public documents to explain a situation or decision and to solve a problem.

8.2.9 Make reasonable statements and draw conclusions about a text, supporting them with accurate examples.

8.4.3 Support theses or conclusions with analogies (comparisons), paraphrases, quotations, opinions from experts, and similar devices

8.5.7 Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person, adjusting tone and style as necessary

8.6.1 Use correct and varied sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) and sentence openings to present a lively and effective personal style.

8.6.2 Identify and use parallelism (use consistent elements of grammar when compiling a list) in all writing to present items in a series and items juxtaposed for emphasis

8.6.5 Use correct punctuation.

8.6.6 Use correct capitalization.

8.6.7 Use correct spelling conventions.

8.7.1 Paraphrase (restate) a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and attitude toward the subject

8.7.2 Match the message, vocabulary, voice modulation (changes in tone), expression, and tone to the audience and purpose

8.7.8 Evaluate the credibility of a speaker, including whether the speaker has hidden agendas or presents slanted or biased material

8.7.15 Deliver descriptive presentations

8.7.13 Deliver persuasive presentations

Social Studies

8.1.12 Explain the main issues, decisions, and consequences of landmark Supreme Court cases: *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), and *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824)

8.1.27 Recognize historical perspective by identifying the historical context in which events unfolded and by avoiding evaluation of the past solely in terms of present-day norms.

8.1.30 Form historical research questions and seek responses by analyzing primary resources — such as autobiographies, diaries, maps, photographs, letters, and government documents — and secondary resources, such as biographies and other nonfiction books and articles on the history of the United States.

8.2.1 Identify and explain essential ideas of constitutional government

8.2.2 Distinguish between a subject and a citizen

8.2.3 Identify and explain the relationship between rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the United States

8.2.4 Define and explain the importance of individual and civic responsibilities.

8.2.5 Identify the ways that people become citizens of the United States

8.2.7 Distinguish among the different functions of national and state government within the federal system by analyzing the Constitution of the United States and the Indiana Constitution

8.2.8 Explain how and why legislative, executive, and judicial powers are distributed, shared, and limited in the constitutional government of the United States.

8.2.9 Examine functions of the national government in the lives of people, including purchasing and distributing public goods and services, financing government through taxation, conducting foreign policy, and providing a common defense

8.2.10 Explain the importance in a democratic republic of responsible participation by citizens in voluntary civil associations/nongovernmental organizations that comprise civil society.

8.2.13 Research and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles related to the Constitution of the United States are in conflict, using a variety of information resources